# PEARL S. BUCK'S TRILOGY, *THE HOUSE OF EARTH*: A JOURNALISTIC ACCOUNT OF PEASANT LIFE

A

SYNOPSIS

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# PEARL S. BUCK'S TRILOGY, *THE HOUSE OF EARTH:* A JOURNALISTIC ACCOUNT OF PEASANT LIFE.

## Introduction:-

Pearl S. Buck is the first American woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize as well as the Pulitzer Prize for literature. She is widely appreciated for her Novels, about the rural life in China, the conflict of tradition and innovation and cultural confrontation. Her themes are mainly of Chinese women and the Asian way of life. This is because though born as an American, she was taken to China as an infant where she was shaped by the values of the late imperial China. As a young girl, she had a great obsession for stories as she remarks:

I loved to hear stories about people *(My Several Worlds 75)*

At the age of eighteen she joined Randolph-Macon women's college in Lynchbury, Virginia, where she was an awkward, unfashionable, attired, outsider. It was here that she became aware of her 'two Worlds' and encouraged by this multi- cultural perspective, she tried to promote cross cultural understanding between Asia and the United States. Through her novels, she reveals to the World the Chinese culture, customs and human relationship.

Pearl S. Buck's literary career extends beyond her eighty works which include fiction essays and non-fictional works. The success of Pearl S. Buck as a writer is probably because she possessed a childhood characteristic throughout her life, namely curiosity. Her indulgent with life and World affairs provided her with material for her writing. Pearl S. Buck's childhood was filled with a sense of alienation. In China she was treated as a foreigner and she felt disoriented. Later when she came to America she felt the similar sense of being displaced and hence abandoned. But from this position she learned to absorb people and learned to love them

irrespective of gender and race. Her bicultural education and the fact that she was bilingual helped her tremendously. She says she was “mentally bifocal” *(My Several Worlds 56).*

Pearl S. Buck’s *The Good Earth* was published in 1931 and republished in 1932 as one volume trilogy entitled *The House of Earth*, with its sequels *Sons* (1932) and *A House Divided* (1935). The epic of Wang Lung Family continues with two sequels to *The Good Earth; Sons* and *A House Divided*. Together, they formed a Trilogy called *The House of Earth*. Many other novels, short stories and children books have been written on American as well as Chinese background. Pearl S. Buck’s Trilogy similarly deals with the fortunes of the one house through three generations. This concern for human beings and relationships has led them to present their characters in the most endearing manner. One theme of the trilogy is certainly the universality of an individual's experience. The unknowable and alien Chinese peasant is transformed here into an unfeared and universal "everyman." Less consciously expressed is the theme of the salutary effect of hard work close to the earth, and the corrupting nature of sloth and luxury. But the most obvious theme is surely the continuity of life itself, the sweeping inevitable cyclical nature of life, where death is counterbalanced by birth; and sadness by joy. This cycle is also evident when, after Wang the Tiger has abjured the ideals of his father for a military career, his son Yuan rejects his father to embrace again the land. As opposed to some of her later more propagandistic novels, the message of *The House of Earth* is primarily nothing more sophisticated than the universal and flow of life; life as it simply is.

The first book in *The House of Earth* trilogy, *The Good Earth* is the story of a very poor peasant Wang Lung who works hard, struggles and become a wealthy landowner. The second book in *The House of Earth* trilogy, *Sons* is the saga of the three male heirs to the great fortune of Wang Lung. Set against the Chinese revolution, Buck weaves their story around the clash of

ancient and modern ideas that threatens to tear the country apart. *A House Divided*, the third volume of the trilogy is the story of Wang Lung's grand son Wang Yuan who is caught between the opposing ideas of different generations. After six years abroad, he returns to China in the middle of a peasant uprising. His cousin is a captain in the revolutionary army. His sister has scandalized the family by her premarital pregnancy, his warlord father continuous to cling to his traditional ideals. It is through Yuan's efforts that a kind of peace is restored to the family.

## A Brief Review of the Work Already Done in the Field:-

The earlier work on Pearl S. Buck is limited. There is much scope of further investigation in the novels of Pearl S. Buck. There are several areas which needed to be explored. Unexplored aspects of the novels of Pearl S. Buck would be investigated.

## Objectives:-

How Pearl S. Buck has very realistically illustrated the Chinese peasant life and their customs and traditions and the role of patriarchy as well as the narrative technique employed by the novelist would be the objectives of the research

## Noteworthy Contributions in the Field of Proposed Work:-

Most of the researchers have done their research on the novels of Pearl S. Buck. Noteworthy contribution done in the novels of Pearl S. Buck follows as Pearl S. Buck Portrayal of man as victim of vicissitudes in *The Good Earth:* San Shwe Baw, Social Construction of Gender in *The Good Earth*: John Vern Jan, Image of Chinese women in Pearl S. Buck's novels: A study of characterization in *East wind west* wind, *Pavilion women, Peony, The Good Earth,*

*and The Mother*: Gao Xlongya ball state university dept. of English, 1993. Women struggle against the patriarchal Chinese Family on Pearl S. Buck's Pavilion of women: Ika kurniawati English letters and language department of humanities and culture faculty the state Islamic university of Malang.

## Proposed Methodology:-

Research method is needed to achieve the purpose of the research and to give clear description of what the researcher has done in the research. There are many steps in writing a thesis. The first one all the three novels of Pearl S. Buck would be studied thoroughly. More information would be obtained from books encyclopedia and other materials available in various libraries and online sources. The primary sources are the novels of Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth: Sons, A House Divided,* published by Simon& Schuster, the data would be presented in the form of word, phrases, sentence and dialogues throughout the novels. The secondary sources would be based on various Journals, research, critical reviews, books and other materials taken from libraries and online sources from the Internet. The Latest edition of MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers will be followed in this research work.

# Chapterization of the Proposed Research Work:-

## Chapter 1. Introduction

The introductory chapter will throw light on biographical sketch of the authoress and major contribution in the field of English fiction. This will help in revealing the genius of Pearl S. Buck in this genre.

## Chapter 2. Chinese Peasant Life: Challenges and Experiences

This chapter will lead in exploring the peasant life as prevalent in China and attempt will be made to analyse and observe the challenges and experiences inherent therein.

## Chapter 3. The Role of Chinese Customs and Traditions in Characterization

This chapter will throw light various customs and traditions observed in the rural Chinese society. The influence of Confucianism upon the lives of Chinese rural people and various rites and rituals which directly or indirectly affect the husband-wife relationship is to be explored.

## Chapter 4. The Roles of patriarchy in the Chinese Society

This chapter is meant to throw light on the role of patriarchy- the oppressions and exploitations of feminine in Chinese society. Women are ‘second’ in Chinese male dominated society who undergoes several sort of mal-treatment in the hands of men.

## Chapter 5. Narrative Technique of Pearl S. Buck

This chapter will throw light the narrative technique of Pearl S. Buck in *The House of Earth.* Pearl S. Buck is highly appreciated for her narrative technique. Her novels show the capacity of the novelist for her vivid presentations of the peasant life in China and Chinese customs and traditions. The three novels of Pearl S. Buck will be taken into consideration on narrative technique.

## Chapter 6. Conclusion

The chapter will be conclusive in nature. In this chapter all the strands related to the previous chapters will be discussed taking into consideration the Chinese peasant life, their customs and traditions, and influence of patriarchy in the Chinese society along with the narrative technique of the novelist employed in her novels.

## Expected Outcome of the Proposed Work :

The effort would be to bring forth Chinese peasant life, Chinese customs and traditions in characterization and the role of patriarchal Chinese family and narrative technique used in *The House of Earth* by Pearl S. Buck in to the lime light and establish the significance of the novels of Pearl S. Buck**.** Through the novels of Pearl S. Buck the peasant life of India also can be studied

## Bibliography in standard format

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Buck Pearl S.: *My Several Worlds*: A personal record New York; NY, 1954.

Harris, Theodore F. *Pearl S. Buck: A Biography in consultation with PSB* New York. The John Day Company 1969.

**List of published papers of the candidate –** none

**Signature of Supervisor Signature of Co-Supervisor Signature of Candidate**

**Forwarded to,**

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